

Down Memory Lane

A Collection of Memories
from Brocton, Milford & Walton



Compiled By
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YOUTH & COMMUNITY EDUCATION SERVICE

This book is dedicated to 91 year old Mrs. Laura Husselbee (nee Dutton) who inspired us all with her good humour, independence and clear and precise memory and whose memories paved the way for so many others.

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Mrs. Katherine Harriet Woods
(1858 - 1941)

Photo courtesy of Harvey Woods

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In particular I want to thank all those who contributed their memories and allowed me to use their photographs and mementoes; Alf Middlefell of the Berkswich Local History Group; the Staff at Baswich Library, Weeping Cross for their cheerful and willing assistance; Mrs. Betty Chaddock of Weeping Cross for her excellent typing and quick and efficient service. I would also like to say thank you to Bill and Maureen Andrews of Stars Newsagents, Weeping Cross; Les and Dot Ward of The White House Stores, Milford and the Staff of Wildwood Newsagents, all of whom helped by selling our last book at cost price, thus enabling us to produce this book; Bookland, Stafford.

FOREWORD

'Out of small acorns mighty oaks grow' is a well known adage and could well be applied to the following tale.

While teaching at Walton High School, Stafford I asked Year 10 (4th year) pupils as part of a Community Project to invite local people to come and talk about their memories of Walton. A Down Memory Lane Morning was held at Walton Youth and Community Centre on Tuesday, 27 March 1990. The morning was attended by about twenty-five people who brought along old photos and reminisced about the past. All was recorded by the pupils on video. The morning seemed to go very quickly so we asked people when they got home to write down their memories and send them to us.

One of them, 89 year old Mrs. Laura Husselbee (nee Dutton), sent us over forty riveting pages in a clear hand. It was fascinating to read. With funding from Walton Youth and Community Centre Mrs. Husselbee's Memoirs - 'Down By Jacob's Ladder' - were published in October 1991. The book was an instant success and had to be reprinted twice.

Mrs. Marjorie Knight (nee Malpass) had attended our first coffee morning and had been inspired by Mrs. Husselbee's book to write her own. With the proceeds of 'Down by Jacob's Ladder' Mrs. Knight's book, 'Before the Houses Came' was published in September 1992. It too was very successful.

From that original coffee morning two local history groups evolved - Phoenix 50+ Local History section which has been going for nearly two years and Berkswich Local History Group which is now firmly established with well over fifty paid up members. Both groups meet monthly and have interesting and varied programmes.

A video 'Down Memory Lane' of people talking about their memories has also been produced.

We are most fortunate in having such community-spirited local newsagents who sold the books for us with no commission for themselves - Stars Newsagents, Weeping Cross; White House Stores, Milford and Wildwood Newsagents. Bookland Stafford agreed to sell the books at a very small commission.

I am sure you will find this third book as interesting as the previous two. I certainly have enjoyed collating it.

Jim Foley
Area Y & C Education Worker,
Walton Y & C Education Centre,
Walton-on-the-Hill,
Stafford.

December 1993

My name is Harvey Samuel Woods. I was born in 1932 in the old Post Office, 14 Walton Village, Stafford. My parents were Walter William Woods and Edith Georgina Woods (nee Crooks). I had one sister Jean older than me.

My grandfather Samuel Woods originally came from Bury St. Edmunds. He went to London to learn the painting and decorating trade. While there he met my grandmother Katherine Harriet Aslin who worked as a cook in a big house there. They got married in London.

My grandmother's sister Charlotte and her husband - the McKenzies - lived in Milford where he was a gamekeeper for the Levetts. They told my grandparents that there was plenty of work in the area and so Samuel and Katherine Woods came and settled in Walton.

Grandfather Woods started a painting and decorating business in the village. At first they lived in one of the cottages near the Pinfold. From there they moved to a cottage called the Springs, so called because of a spring at the side of the cottage which you could hear quite clearly bubbling away. From this cottage Grandmother Woods started the village Post Office. The cottage belonged to the Allsopps of Walton Bury and because my grandfather did a lot of work for them he and his family were allowed to live there.

About 1900 the Woods family moved from the Springs to 14 Walton Village - what is now known as the Old Post Office. It belonged to Lord Lichfield's estate and his agent allowed them to live there rent free for one year because of the poor condition of the place.



The Post Office, Walton.
Samuel and Katherine Woods



My grandparents were expected to bring it back to a habitable condition. I can vaguely remember my father saying that someone by the name of Genders used to live there. I believe he was a cobbler. His son it seems was a bit simple and used to be teased by the village lads. The house itself was divided into two semis. After my grandparents had done it up my grandmother later told me they were charged half-a-crown a week (2/6d. or 12½ pence, except we no longer have the ½ penny).

My grandparents had four children, my father Bill, George and Marguerite (Rita). The youngest, John, is supposed to have died from peritonitis after eating cherry stones from a cherry tree in the garden.

Marguerite (Rita) Woods, my father's sister, was born in 1895 at the Springs. When she was an adult she ran a little business in an outhouse at the back of the Old Post Office making false teeth. Grandfather Samuel Woods too ran his painting and decorating business from the back of the Old Post Office. Rita married Bill Ashcroft in 1924 and went to live in the Springs. All our families on both sides seem to have lived in the Springs at some time in their lives. Bill used to work with Lotus the shoe people.

Aunt Rita had no family. They moved from the Springs to Penkridge where they had a small-holding. Later they returned to live in Brocton.



Samuel Woods and Katherine Woods with their
two children Rita and John, circa 1899
outside Walton Post Office at the Springs

Photo courtesy of Harvey Woods



Samuel and Katherine Woods with their children
Walter William and George, circa 1892

Photo courtesy of Harvey Woods

My grandparents on my mother's side were Charles and Rosabelle Crooks (nee Carter). They came to Walton from Droitwich where my grandfather worked for Lord and Lady Inlipp. The Inlippes were related to the Allsopps of Walton Bury.

In those days if the gentry could get hold of a good gardener who could win them gardening prizes at the shows they provided the gardener and his family with a cottage.

In 1908 Grandfather Crooks arrived in Walton to start work as a gardener for the Allsopps. His family came with him to live at the Springs while Captain Allsopp had a cottage built for them next door to the Springs. The Crooks family didn't stay long in Walton as Grandmother Crooks hated the village and in 1910 they returned to Worcestershire.

They were followed by the Northwoods when Mr. Northwood became gardener for the Allsopps.

My grandparents' two daughters Edith and Annie Blanche (Sis) Crooks regularly returned to Walton to visit Rita Woods who was about the same age as them. During the First World War the visits stopped. Edith Crooks married an army captain in Droitwich. Soon after he went to France. Unfortunately he was injured while leading his men over the top of the trench during an attack on the German lines. He was captured by the Germans and later died of his injuries in France.



Class at Walton Village School Circa 1905
Headmaster Mr. Longson with his teacher-wife,
Mrs. Longson
Rita Woods 2nd row from back, 3rd girl on left

My father Bill Woods and his brother George served in the First World War and both survived - my father with some luck. They signed on at the Borough Hall, Stafford for the Guards. They went to Caterham Barracks and after training they were all asked if anyone knew anything about flying as they were looking for mechanics to service the aeroplanes of the fledgling Royal Flying Corps. My father and his brother volunteered but only my father went to France where he became a Flight Sergeant Mechanic with No. 2 Squadron.

George was excluded because of his health and served with the R.F.C. in England.

My father had a narrow escape from death while serving in France. A plane crashed onto the hanger in which he was working and burst into flames. He was badly burnt and had to be sent home. He convalesced at Sandon Hall which was a Military Hospital during the war.

After the war my father and Uncle George used to cycle 50 miles to Droitwich to visit the Crooks girls. Their efforts were not wasted as my father Bill Woods married my mother Edith Crooks at St. Thomas's Church, Walton in June 1924. I don't think Grandmother Crooks was very keen on their getting married in Walton because she never liked the place. My parents went to live in a bungalow in Milford not far from the White House Stores.

When the First World War ended there was no need for the military camp on Cannock Chase at Brocton. Uncle George bought two of the redundant huts used by the soldiers. They were quite large those huts. One he used to set up a garage on the main road at Walton. He called it Walton Garage. The other was converted into a bungalow where he lived with his wife Amy Smith from Grantham, Lincs. Her father was a butcher there. While he managed the garage she ran a pork sausage and pie business from their bungalow.

From the garage Uncle George ran a taxi business as well as repairing cars. My father was the chief mechanic. Uncle George also sold cars at the garage. Motor lawn mowers had just come out and one of his best incomes was from selling them to the big houses. I believe he made more money from selling mowers than from selling cars.

It was quite enterprising of Uncle George to start a garage as motor-cars were few and far between. He was a bit too far ahead of the market and in 1928 he sold the garage and the bungalow and went to work at Attwood's Garage in Stafford as a car salesman.

When Grandfather Woods died in 1932 Grandmother Woods continued to run the Post Office. My parents moved into the cottage next door. My grandmother ran Walton Village Post Office for 40 years. As part of her job she took incoming telephone calls for villagers and made calls out for them. She used to breed Pekinese dogs. Katherine Harriet Woods died in 1941.



George Woods in his taxi
outside Walton on the Hill - the house.



Walton Garage - some years after
George Woods sold it.
Photo courtesy of Mr. and Mrs. Hunt



George Woods and his wife Amy lived in this bungalow which was once an army hut at Brocton Army Camp during the 1914-18 War. She ran her shop from the end nearest the road on the left. The bungalow and tennis courts were where Walton Garage - the workshop and parking area now are at the junction of The Rise and Milford Road.

Photo courtesy of Mr. and Mrs. Hunt who lived there after the Woods.

George Eales was a car salesman for Attwoods who were the leading car sales people in Stafford. One day he told my Uncle George Woods how he'd been driving across Queensville Bridge when he saw this most beautiful woman walking towards Stafford with a group of people. He just couldn't get over how beautiful she was. Uncle George informed him that he was one of the people in the group walking towards Stafford that day and the beautiful woman was his brother Bill's sister-in-law Sis Crooks. George Eales married Sis Crooks. They had a daughter Lindy (Buttner) who now lives in Rochdale where she is married and has two girls of her own.

During the Second World War my father was called up for Work of National Importance. He went to work with Aero Alvis in Blackheath Road, Stafford. There was a small factory on the edge of the wood near the junction with Weston Road. My father had the job of building up engines for Spitfires and testing them. Engine parts used to come in crates from Coventry. My father would build them up, wire them and put them on test for so many hours. They had a test bed for four engines and when the wind was in the right direction the engines made a mighty roar that could be heard in Walton.

Ted Giles, the village blacksmith, got a job as a gateman at the Aero Alvis factory during the War. He couldn't believe his luck in landing such a job. It was quite a change from shoeing heavy cart horses.



Mrs. Katherine Harriet Woods
and her daughter Rita
outside the Old Post Office, Walton
Photo courtesy of Harvey Woods

In 1954 I met Barbara Weaver at the Youth Club in Walton Village Hall. In 1958 we were married at St. Thomas' Church, Walton. Our two sons Stephen and Andrew were both born at the Old Post Office. We left there in 1987 and moved to a modern house in the village.

My sister Jean Woods married Bill Bolton who had been an evacuee to Walton with Chatham High School. They met at a dance at Stafford Borough Hall. They had two boys, David and Terry. Bill died of a heart attack in 1988 and Jean died in 1990. They had four grandchildren.

My mother used to tell me about the wonderful parties held by the servants in the Servants' Hall at Walton Bury whenever the Allsopps went away on a grand tour of Europe. My mother was a friend of one of the Pierces who worked there. All the young people of the village used to be invited.

On one of these occasions someone taught the old Captain Allsopp's parrot to swear. One day on his return he came storming into the Servants' Hall and said, "Who's been teaching my bloody parrot to swear?"

I believe the Captain had a drink problem and his wife sent him away somewhere because he wasn't seen for a few years.



Two views of the big house known as
Walton on the Hill.

The house was demolished in 1972.
Village Gardens was built on the site.



Photos courtesy of Mrs. Joan Pickerin

My name is Joan Pickerin (nee Robinson). In 1932 when I was 11 years old my family moved from Northampton to Walton, Stafford. We moved from a four bedroom detached house to one with 42 rooms, large gardens with resident gardener and its own electricity making plant. The house was called Walton on the Hill and was situated where Village Gardens now stands. My step-father Surtees Walker, a builder, bought the house from the estate of a Miss Brace who had lived there. Lady Salt had lived in the house before that. My step-father converted the big house into seven flats. We lived in the right-hand section where the main living quarters of Lady Salt and Miss Brace had been.

There was a lovely stone wall along the main road to the front of the property with a long sweeping drive taking you up to the house. Behind the wall a 10' high holly hedge ran all the way along to Congreve House.

In the gardens there was a wonderful lime tree by a summer house. I remember a sundial on the front lawn, with a reference to Lady Salt - 1921 on it.

The kitchen gardens to the side of the house were sheltered by a high brick wall. It can still be seen along the service road going down the side of the shops at the top of The Rise. In the kitchen gardens were greenhouses and lots of fruit trees and bushes, apples, pears, peaches, plums, greengages, grapes, gooseberries, raspberries, blackcurrants - every fruit you could think of.

There were some old stables which my step-father converted into flats. Mrs. Cook lived there until she died in 1992.

Near us in Congreve House lived the Misses Burton. I can remember chickens wandering about on their land.

It is said that a sign post by the village school with the name Walton on the Hill was made by Lady Salt to direct visitors to her home - Walton on the Hill. It would appear that over the years people began to think the sign post referred to the village and so it became known as Walton on the Hill. It is only the older residents who now know the village as Walton.

When we came Arthur Weatherer was the Gardener. He lived with his family in the bungalow at the top of The Rise. He had worked for Miss Brace. We kept him on as a gardener/handyman and he also looked after the petrol engine which supplied electricity to the house. Mr. Weatherer had one daughter Winnie who used to do the cleaning for my mother, Elsie Walker. When Mr. Weatherer retired he and his family went to live in a house on Milford Road near the village school.

My mother opened a village store in the bungalow and I used to help her. From what is now the hairdresser's shop she ran Walton Post Office. I remember the mail used to come at 4 o'clock in the morning and a postman used to sort it in the village Post Office.

My mother continued to run the shop and Post Office during the war. In 1944 when I married, my husband Bob Pickerin took over the Post Office and ran it for about four years before he moved to work in the main Post Office in Stafford.

About 1948 my mother sold the shop to the Co-op who ran it as a grocery shop. Mr. & Mrs. Edwards opened the village Post Office in their shop next to Walton Village Hall on the Milford Road. It is now a bicycle shop.

Years later a village shop and Post Office re-opened in the shop at the top of The Rise. The shop is now a showroom for a kitchen furnishing firm and the Post Office has moved to a private dwelling on The Crescent.

My step-father Surtees Walker built a lot of houses in and around Walton village. He built some houses down The Rise, all those on The Crescent and all the bungalows except two on the main Milford Road, Walton.

My step-father died in 1967. When my mother died in 1972 the property was left to me. It was far too large for me to maintain so I sold it. The house - apart from the old stables - was demolished and Village Gardens was built on the site.

My husband and I live not far from Walton in Weeping Cross. We have three children Tony, Roger and Anthea and seven grand-children.



My grand-parents,
Hannah and Arthur Weatherer



My parents, Eric and Edith Weatherer
on their engagement in 1919.
It was my mother's 18th birthday

My name is Mavis Burton (nee Weatherer). My grandfather Arthur Weatherer was chauffeur/handyman for Lady Salt. He was born in Penkridge on 22 November 1873 and lived there for some years before he moved to Walton at the turn of the century to become chauffeur/handyman to Lady Salt at her residence, Walton on the Hill. He lived in a cottage in the grounds of the house. I can remember in the middle 30's the house had a very high wall round it. My brothers Dennis and Donald and myself stayed there often at weekends. There were large gardens and a tennis court.

My grandfather on my mother's side was Francis Patrick Caulfield, a shoemaker. My mother was Edith Agnes Caulfield. I know that my father, Eric Arthur Weatherer, was a choirboy at St. Thomas' Church, Walton and that he attended the village school. He told me his boyhood friends were Bill Bennett and Syd Staton. His childhood sweetheart was May Pierce.

My father enlisted in the North Staffordshire Regiment in 1916 and went to France. There he was transferred to the Royal Engineers. In 1919 he was discharged "No longer physically fit". He had, in fact, been gassed. I have a silver tankard given to my father in 1920 and inscribed with the words, "1920 Parish of Berkswich. To Eric Weatherer for War Services".

I can clearly remember before the Second World War my grandfather and father used to take me to visit Mr. Giles, the blacksmith, every Sunday morning.

When my grandfather Arthur Weatherer died my Aunt Winifred Mary had to move from the cottage. She went to live at Pear Tree Cottage, Milford Road, now Main Road, Walton. The cottage was owned by a Miss Edwards who when she died left the cottage to my aunt. Aunt Winifred Mary stayed there until she died in 1978. Her next door neighbour I believe was a builder named Osborne. He had two sons, John and Michael. My aunt left the cottage to my two brothers and myself. It was sold in 1978.



Mrs. Mason's Tea Room, Milford
where we used to have tea when we walked
to Milford Common on a Sunday outing.

Photo courtesy of Mrs. Burton (nee Weatherer)

MRS. HASZARD REMEMBERS

I have lived in Milford nearly all my life and know very little about Walton, but I will try and write something.

Walton Church I think was built in 1872. My family helped to build it but in a very small way. It must have been a help to the Parish because in those days Baswich was the only Church. Built in the 12th Century with great connections with St. Thomas's Abbey (pronounced Centamus), it still stands and, in a good book on churches, it is deemed famous. Why? Because of two family pews - one belonging to the Levetts of Milford Hall, the other (the oldest) to the Chetwynds of Brocton Hall. Only my father ever used our pew. The rest of the family thought both the pews sacriligious (and, of course, they were right). He and I (and I was small at the time) walked from Milford Hall to Baswich, via two small paths across fields, leading to Baswich Lane. I look back in amazement at that feat. Now, people living opposite the Church would not trouble to step across the road to the famous old Church! The Chetwynd Pew was absolutely destroyed by vandals - flooded, then burnt. Baswich is not the same. When my Aunts used our pew they saw, opposite, in a box pew the servants from Brocton reading novels. No doubt ours, in their box pew, were doing the same !!

I mentioned two small paths across fields. They were reached by a stile, exactly opposite a small flight of stairs, on the opposite side of the Milford Road. Are they still there? Next to the stile was an old cottage in which lived two old men who were cobblers. One was apparently madly in love with my Nanny, a very handsome woman. I remember peering out of my pram, staring at the complete muddle of their old workshop.



Two views of Milford Hall
Photos courtesy of
Mr. & Mrs. Haszard, Milford Hall



And now, back to Walton !! Captain Allsopp founded an excellent cricket field on the Old Croft (now a mass of streets and houses). We had some excellent matches there - one of the best players was the Vicar, the Rev. George Inge, a member of I. Zingari, the best cricket club in the world. He married Catty Spooner of Walton Lodge (now gone), niece of the famous Dean Spooner of Spoonerism fame and they were beloved of everyone in the Parish for many, many years.

Of Vicars and Curates we have had dozens and dozens but as a child nearly eighty years ago I remember one Curate - Mr. Cappell, an attractive man with a loud laugh. He became an Army Chaplain and had the misfortune to fall into a trench which then collapsed on him. He was not found for some time and his health was ruined.

Back to Walton! There was a lovely old cottage, covered in Wisteria, in which old Mr. Keeling lived. He was the caretaker and bell ringer for Walton Church for a great many years.

Why pull these old houses down?

It is the fashion now to abuse young people and say they are selfish and rude. I have never found them so; on the contrary, helpful and considerate. But I have one complaint. They neither know anything, nor care about the great epic of the World Wars. If one mentions Dunkirk they look blank - that great epic of escape with the help of tiny coastal boats and then that almost impossibly colossal scheme of the Normandy landings which succeeded and eventually won the most awfully evil of all Wars. Churchill said, "If we lose this campaign, our Christian civilisation will disappear, perhaps for ever." We must all remember those words.

No marriage ever took place! The house, very old and attractive, has now been pulled down; I think it was a tiny small-holding.

If I was asked to describe transport I should be quite incapable of doing it - there was none!

Mr. Alderson at Milford Common corner owned a small pony who scraped a living on the Common. If one wanted anything heavy fetching from Stafford his small cart was the only hope. Later Mr. Nickolls started the first 'bus service. A 'bus to and from Stafford! What luxury! Before 1912 there were only three cars on the road - Captain Levett's Sunbeam, Captain Allsopp's Daimler and Dr. Reid's Rover. The traffic in cities was not easy; all horse drawn, it was occasionally hectic and in a muddle.

My father used a small pony carriage to go to Stafford for meetings. One day on Queensville Bridge he saw a car rounding the brow of the hill. Terrified that the pony would bolt he waved his whip to stop the car. Naturally, the driver nor the pony took any notice and all was well.

Before 1915 I lived at the Lodge (Milford Lodge) and while there I saw one of nature's phenomena - Halley's Comet. Comets are one of nature's great delights. Many of them come over the earth but are usually invisible. Halley's is predictable and returns every 76 years. It had already appeared in 1843 and 1858.

Astronomers were waiting for it in 1910 and it came. It appeared to be a large ball (of dirty ice, ice mixed with chemicals), lit up brilliantly by the sun. Trailing behind it was an immense tail of gas and dust, not quite

so brilliant as the ball, but rather terrifying. It was supposed to be as old as the solar system which is, they tell us, $4\frac{1}{2}$ thousand million years. It appeared to be quite low in the sky but, of course, was not. As a child of 10 I gazed at it for hours. Very slowly it moved off to the south. The appearances of Halley's Comet have been recorded since the year 2647 B.C., chiefly by the Chinese.

Halley's was due to return in 1986 and my son promised me a flight in an aeroplane to see it. We were warned that this apparition would not be seen from the earth. We went, from Birmingham, and had a good lecture on where in the sky we should see it. I am fond of astronomy and knew where to gaze, but no Halley's appeared. The sight of Birmingham lit up at night was phenomenal but I shall have to wait until the year 2062 to see Halley's!

I said I lived at Milford Lodge because my Grandmother, aged 93, refused to leave the Hall. My father bought the Lodge from the Twiggs - a very old and respected family who had known the Parish for many years.

It was very exciting moving into the Hall - all by donkey-cart! but the Hall itself was miserably disappointing. It was dirty and uncomfortable; the kitchen floor a mass of cockroaches and the walls papered in black (we thought). It was not papered at all - the black was dirt. The huge stove used a ton of coal a week; lamps gave the only light; there was no heating and no baths and few lavatories. My mother set about it with a vengeance and in a few years it has become the lovely old country house we all admire.

FOOTNOTE

Mrs. Dyonesse Rosamund Haszard died peacefully in her sleep on 26 July 1993 at St. Thomas's Convent, Stafford. She was 93.



Rev. and Mrs. Inge

Photo courtesy of Alf Middlefell

My name is Ann Bates (nee Northwood). My parents Richard and Jane Northwood came to Walton Bury, Walton-on-the-Hill with their four children on 1 October 1909. George, the eldest, was 4 years old, William and Ellen-Mary (Nell), 3 years old and Thomas Evan, the baby was 1 year old. They came from Derbyshire where my father had worked as a gardener for the Jarvis family. My mother's maiden name was McPhearson and her family were crofters from near Aberdeen. Three more children were born in the house at Walton, Barbara Jane born 1912 and Margaret and myself - Ann Northwood - born twins in 1916.

Mother died of 'flu on 28 March 1919. She left seven children, the youngest, the twins, were just 2 years old. Nell, only 13 herself, looked after the family while Father was at work.

My father worked as Head Gardener for Captain and Mrs. H. Allsopp at Walton Bury. His training had been at White's Nursery in Worcester, where he lived with many others in the bothy - a kind of hostel for the workers.

We lived in the cottage near the Bury rent free as part of the wage. When Father died, we found receipts of his wages - 30/- per week. We never knew through the years what a perpetual struggle as a widower it must have been to keep us all.

The Vicarage was at the centre of the village next to the Church. I remember Rev. and Mrs. Inge. Later came Rev. Hitchings, a bachelor. My sister Barbara played the organ at Brocton Mission Church for many years and sometimes at Walton and Baswich churches.



Walton Bury, home of
Captain and Mrs. H. Allsopp



The Gardens, Walton Bury,
home of the Northwood family.

We went to Walton Village School at the bottom of School Lane. Now it is a nursery. Once a week the Vicar, Mr. Hitchings, came and said morning prayers. On Saints Days we were taken to the church and sometimes had the rest of the day off. Mr. Longson was Headmaster and Mrs. Longson was Headmistress. They were a most loving and understanding couple. Mrs. Annie Longson helped many sick people in the parish - sometimes sitting up all night with them. She was a great example to us all. They lived in the cottage by the school.

Then there was Miss Mary Alice Tagg, a teacher, who was a great worker for the church and parish. She spent her whole life in this way. She ran the Sunday School, helping at weddings and all the social events - all unpaid. She lived in the village.

Miss Goldsmith was the infants' teacher. She lived in Rickerscote with her sister who taught at Rickerscote Village School. Miss Goldsmith cycled to school - in all weathers! She persevered with reading lessons.

On wet, cold days Mrs. Longson had hot cups of cocoa ready for children who had to walk to school from Baswich, Brancote, Brocton and Tixall. (No buses, of course, or fathers with cars). She dried their wet clothes and boots by the fire. There was so much kindness which we did not appreciate until later years.

Easter, Whitsun and Christmas we got up very early for Communion. There were long rows of various families - lovely occasions as the villagers all knew one another. At Harvest Festivals the church was overflowing and everyone was in good voice!



Mr. Richard Northwood
gardener to the Allsopps, Walton Bury

Photo courtesy of Mrs. Ann Bates (nee Northwood)

At Christmas time there was a parish party for the children in the school (take your own mug) after which there was a parish social with the locals doing their own special acts and, of course, dancing.

Walking down the fields with my father and over Cannock Chase was something we looked forward to. This was always in the evening after Church. In the season we gathered bilberries en route.

A postman went round the village once a day, six days per week. The time never varied, 7 a.m.

We fetched our own milk from Walton Farm at the top of the lane, early morning and evening. We mostly went along to the cow shed to watch cows being milked. The men sat on low three-legged stools.

A Mr. Wilkins from Brocton delivered the coal, 1 ton each time. He had a horse and cart and dropped coal at the gate. All the family helped to "barrow" it in. It was a huge undertaking. Mr. Wilkins fetched the coal from Milford Railway Station.

Mr. Dodd at the old Coffee House, Milford, was the local shoe repairer. We used to stand and watch him with the tacks in his mouth. We all knew the family well through the church choir.

The Vicar (Mr. Inge) had a coachman named Mr. Pierce who lived in the old school house.

Mr. Morgan at Walton Lodge had a super carriage.

If catching a train, the better-off people hired Mr. Fletcher's horse and trap to take them to the railway station at Milford or Stafford. We walked to Stafford and back. It seemed a long, long way!

Nurse Smith was a district nurse and lived at Milford in one of the lodges to Shugborough. She knew the families very well, having delivered their babies. We only called the doctor for bad cases as the cost was 10/- a visit. A dentist came to the school and filled or extracted teeth. It was most disturbing to hear the shouts of the patients. A doctor called at the school for chest checks etc.

Most evenings after our meal we played Whist or Don, but at Christmas time it was "Three Card Loo", "Put and Take", Draughts, Snakes and Ladders and Snap.

There was no wireless in those days; people made their own entertainment which was most enjoyable in a large family.

Some evenings were spent around the huge kitchen table - some knitting, sewing, mending or embroidering etc. Most clothes were made at home.

We had outings once a year with the Sunday School, mostly in an open char-a-banc; great excitement, but so many times it was Lichfield Cathedral. I clearly remember travelling to Tong Church, through Weston-under-Lizard Park. The choir had a separate outing to the seaside by train.

Street games were very safe to play around the village as there was very little traffic. We played skipping, stilts, tops, hoops, five stones, jumping, leapfrog, scooters, swings, walking on top of fences around the fields, catapults and slings, tipling (acrobatics on top bars of fences) and climbing trees.

There was only one shop on the main road, near to the school, for sweets etc. We did not have pocket money and my father insisted that any errands done for local people must be done as a means to help others.

There was no village pub but men of the village walked across the fields to the Seven Stars public house. I often saw them return home and have difficulty with the "Kissing Gate" near the road. They also visited the Barley Mow at Milford and the Trumpet at Radford.

I remember quite clearly the village show which was an annual event held in the field - now the Milford Cricket Ground. Competition was great at the show - the standard of fruit and vegetables was very high as so many people were experienced gardeners.

Even in those days there were flower arrangements which were part and parcel of a gardener's life, having to arrange all flowers in the homes of the aristocracy. There were sports, too, for young and old. It was a day much looked forward to by one and all.

Mostly in January or February a Pageant took place in the Borough Hall, Stafford - a much smaller county town then.

Most organisations in the town and surrounding villages took part and Miss Stitchlings Dancing School dancers were a great attraction.

Our parish usually produced a biblical event, with the local Choral Society taking a huge part.

Looking back, it was a very full and happy life. We were taught how to work, and play too, and to share our lives with others even more unfortunate than ourselves.



Barbara Northwood behind, and
twins Margaret and Ann Northwood
circa 1924

My name is Margaret Bates (nee Northwood). My father Richard Northwood was gardener for 39 years to the Allsopp family - Capt. The Hon. H.T. Allsopp and his wife, The Hon. Mrs. E.M. Allsopp and their daughter Cynthia. My father died on 11 November 1948. My mother Jane had died 30 years earlier from 'flu leaving seven children, the eldest Nell, 13, and the youngest my twin-sister Ann and myself, 2 years old.

My sister Barbara started playing the organ at Brocton Mission Room about 1925 when she was 13 years old and she played until September 1979 - 54 years. As a girl she was in the choir at both Walton and Baswich churches, when Miss Amy Reilly was the organist. She was a pupil of Miss Reilly who lived on the Wolverhampton Road, Stafford. She used to come and give Barbara a music lesson every Friday evening before choir practise at the church.

Miss M. Alice Tagg always attended Brocton Mission Room on a Sunday morning. She walked down the Brocton Lane and took the Sunday School in the Mission Room before the eleven o'clock morning service. Mr. Wilfred Morgan always attended the service and read the lessons.

The Rev. Charles James Barry was vicar from 1941 until 1948. The previous vicar was the Rev. Reginald Norman Lawson - from 1933 to 1941.



Walton Village School,
School Lane, Walton



Mrs. Longson and Mr. Longson
Headmistress and Headmaster
Walton Village School

Photo courtesy of Miss Annie Torevell

Mr. W. Longson and his wife Annie came to Walton schools in 1891. They retired in August 1926 after spending 35 years teaching and caring for the very many children living in the parish. They spent some 20 years in retirement at Barmouth, North Wales, before returning to Milford to end their days.

In the Infants School was Miss Lilian Goldsmith (who lived at Rickerscote with her sister, who was also a teacher at Rickerscote school). In the second class was Miss Mary Alice Tagg who lived in the village at Walton. The third and fourth classes were taken by Mrs. Annie Longson and the top three classes by Mr. William Longson. After the register was "called" each morning we had prayers and a hymn. Grace was sung at mid-day and on returning to school after dinner. We also sang a hymn at the close of school.

They seemed to be very happy days at school. Mrs. Longson taught the girls knitting and sewing. She also gave cookery classes once a week at the Parish Room in School Lane. The top boys were instructed in gardening. During the first world war, due to the shortage of bread, school dinners were cooked by the 'top' girls at the school house and then taken over to the school and served to all the children who stayed for dinner. The girls also did a lot of knitting of socks, gloves, mittens and scarves for the soldiers. They must indeed have been most industrious.

In the winter a big boy used to go to each of the classrooms to take the temperature. On very cold days at mid-morning a large jug of cocoa was brought from the school house for any children who were cold. Every morning and evening old Mrs. Coates from Stockton Common used to come to clean the schools.



Mrs. Jane Northwood
who died so tragically in 1918
leaving seven young children

Photo courtesy of Mrs. Ann Bates (nee Northwood)

From the early 1920's we had annual visits from the school doctor, dentist and nurse.

During Lent the Rev. Gerard Hitchings came for one morning a week to give the top classes religious instruction.

There were many large families who attended Walton school. They walked long distances, in all weathers, from Tixall village, Brancote, Milford, Brocton village and crossroads, Hazelstrine, Weeping Cross and St. Thomas' Mill and Stockton Common and Lane.

If children were absent from school for more than a few days then the Attendance Officer would pay them a visit in their own homes to investigate the reason why.

We had Sunday School on a Sunday afternoon at 2 p.m. in Walton school with Miss Tagg. We then proceeded at 3 p.m. to Walton Church for a short service with the Rev. Hitchings. Miss Birks played the little harmonium for the hymns. Often there were babies christened at the afternoon service. In the summer-time the vicar would often invite all the children to his garden after the service, which was very nice. At Christmas time we had a party held in the schools. In the summer we had a charabanc outing - going to such places as Lichfield Cathedral, Alton Towers and Trentham Gardens.

In about 1920 Nell was in the Girl Guides. Miss D. Levett was the Guide Captain and meetings were held at her home, Milford Hall. About 1922 Tom was a Boy Scout under the leadership of Mr. Williscroft. Their meetings were held at Milford Hut, and in about 1923 Ann and I were Brownies. Miss Betty Hand from Weeping Cross was our Brown Owl.

Meetings were held on a Saturday morning at her home; they were very enjoyable. We progressed into the Girl Guides - Miss Gibson from Brocton was our Captain and meetings were held in Walton school.

In the early 1920's the village at Walton was most picturesque. All the cottages had well-kept gardens. There was a 'roadman' who used to keep all the verges tidy and free from weeds.

At Walton Lodge lived a Mr. Morgan and his son Wilfred. He was an old gentleman who used to ride about in his horse and carriage. He was an invalid and was also taken out in a 'bath-chair' by a nurse and the garden boy. I believe the old Parish Room in School Lane was, at one time, a school (before the Infant School was built).

There was a footpath up the 'Old Croft' fields that led on to the Cannock Road, near to the Seven Stars pub.

There was a pond near to the Old Croft gate where the cows used to drink and another pond, on the left hand side, at the bottom of Walton Bank.

There was a footpath near to Mr. Giles' house, crossing into Stockton Lane and then went on into Baswich Lane which was used for going to Baswich Church on a Sunday morning.

At the farm at Walton lived Mr. and Mrs. H. Malpass and their daughter, Marjorie. They kept a large number of cows and supplied milk to most of the villagers and also to many people at Milford. Near to the farm was Walton Bury where the Hon. Mrs. E.M. Allsopp and her daughter Cynthia lived. In the early 1920's Mrs. Allsopp was President of the Berkswich Womens Institute and in June of



each year she entertained the members in her house and gardens. Miss Alice Tagg was their Secretary for many years.

In the village there lived a Mr. Tommy Fletcher and his wife. He had been the farrier for many years; also, for over sixty years he had been a regular bellringer at Baswich Church on a Sunday morning. He had a pony and trap and would often transport people to and from Stafford station.

Mr. Charles Dodd, who lived with his wife and family at the "Old Dame Coffee House" at Milford, was also in the choir, both at Walton and Baswich churches, for over sixty years. He was a cobbler by trade.

After Mr. Fletcher retired from The Smithy a Mr. Ted Giles was then for many years the village blacksmith, together with a young assistant. They were kept busy shoeing the horses from all the surrounding farms.

At Wisteria Cottage, Walton, lived old Mr. Keeling who was the Verger at Walton church for many years. He had a beautiful garden and in the summer he would sell bunches of flowers for a few pence to the school children.

At the Post Office at Walton, which was an old thatched house, lived Mr. Sam Woods and his wife. Mr. Woods was a painter and decorator by trade.

At the large house at the top of Walton Bank lived a Miss Brace. She employed Mr. Weatherer as a chauffeur/gardener. He lived in a bungalow at the top of Walton Bank.

Then there is 'Congreve House' near the centre of the village which dates back to 1742. Mr. & Mrs. Burton and their family lived there for many years. Mr. Burton was a builder by trade and built the houses on the left-hand side of Kitlings Lane.

There was a Mr. & Mrs. Fradley who lived in the village with their family. Mr. Fradley worked at Walton Bury gardens for many years.

Mr. Bennett and his wife and family also lived in the village. Mr. Bennett was the head gardener at Walton Lodge. They had a beautiful well-kept garden at the Lodge.

In the village, too, lived a Miss Ball - she was a retired ladies maid. She used to take her little dog for a walk every afternoon down Brocton Lane. She was a very sedate lady who wore long black skirts.

There was old Mr. Devall and his wife who lived in a cottage near to the church. They used to 'take in' washing for the 'big houses'.

There were a couple of cottages, near to the church, where the farm workers and their families lived who worked at Walton Farm.

There was Mr. Walls, his wife and family. Mr. Walls was a gardener at the big house at the top of Walton Bank when Lady Salt lived there.

There was old Lady Trundley, a widow, who lived in the village. She had lost her only son Jim in the 1914-18 war. She was a dear little lady who dressed in black and wore a lace cap on her hair.

Mr. & Mrs. Williscroft and their family lived near to the church. Mr. Williscroft was a chimney sweep and gardener. Mrs. Williscroft used to clean the church at Walton.

Mr. & Mrs. Clements also lived in the village. Mr. Clements worked at the waterworks at Milford, and Mr. & Mrs. C. Dawson and their family lived in the cottage next to the Parish Room. Mr. Dawson worked at the waterworks at Milford also. With them lived old Mrs. Holt who was Mrs. Dawson's mother. She lived to be almost a hundred years old.

In the early 1920's there were no houses in School Lane. It was Mr. Pierce's field where he kept his pigs and chickens.

There was just one house near to the school, where Mr. & Mrs. Pointon lived. They were retired.

There was a pinfold in the centre of the village where stray animals, sheep, cows etc. were put until such time as they were claimed.

On the main road, near to the school, lived Miss Birks and her mother, who also lived to be a great age! Miss Birks was a staunch church worker and also a W.I. member for many years.

Mr. Clay and his brother also lived on the main Milford Road and had a business. He was a wheelwright by trade.

Mr. & Mrs. Wm. Wright also lived in a small cottage on the Milford Road. They had quite a large family. Mr. Wright worked at Milford station.

In the house in the field next to Walton Farm lived Mr. Walter Twigg with his wife and three daughters. Mr. Twigg worked at Attwoods Garage on the Lichfield Road, Stafford.



Green Gore Lane, Walton

Photo courtesy of Mrs. Evans (nee Pierce)



Photo courtesy of Mrs. Winifred Evans
(nee Pierce)

Pierce family (circa 1900)

BACK:	Arthur	George (my father)
MIDDLE:		
Frederick,	Mr. John Pierce,	Mrs. Sarah Pierce (nee Ward)
	with Lily	with baby May
FRONT:	Harry	

My name is Winifred Evans (nee Pierce). I was born on 13 January 1919 in Walton, Stafford at my parents' home on the main Milford Road near the School House. My parents ran the village grocers shop. My father, George Edward Pierce, was an engineer with Siemens later to become English Electric Company and more recently, G.E.C. My mother was Frances Pierce (nee Rowson). My parents had three children, all girls - Phyllis May, the eldest, myself and Doris Thelma, the youngest.

My grandfather John Pierce, affectionately known as Grandad 'Walton', was born in Wales in 1864. He came to Walton as Head Gardener at the Vicarage. He was a gentle-mannered person with a complexion like peaches and cream. It was said that he had a bad temper and that when he was angry he would swear in Welsh and no-one could understand him. He couldn't read or write but he knew how to make money. Grandma Sarah Pierce, or Grandma 'Walton' as we called her, was the scholar and with her prompting he bought land in Walton. They had two cottages built on the main Milford Road, Walton and when my parents married they moved into one of them.

My grandparents had eight children - twins Margaret and Elizabeth who died as babies, then George, May, Lily, Arthur, Harry and Frederick.

Grandad Pierce had two fields at the back of School Lane, Walton. People used to call them Pierce's fields. Later he sold the land as building plots at £100 per acre.



My parents' wedding photo, 11 April 1914

L to R back:

Grandad Rowson Grandad Pierce

Middle row : Aunt Lily Pierce, Mrs. Tranter, Grandma Rowson, my parents
 Frances (Rowson) and George Pierce, Grandma Pierce, Aunt May Pierce

Two girls unidentified

Taken near Milford Pumping Station

During the First World War Grandad collected all the swill from the Army Camps on Cannock Chase to feed his pigs. It was said that everyone knew Pierce's pigs. They only had to rub their hands on the back of the pigs and they'd come away with a handful of grease. Grandad Pierce made a lot of money that way.

Grandfather Pierce and his family lived in the house next door to us and farmed from there. He also had a large vegetable plot at the back of Mrs. Pointon's house, No. 1 School Lane. Eventually he built a bungalow No. 2 School Lane and retired there. It had quite a large piece of land with it and a vegetable garden.

My parents opened a grocers' shop in the house Grandad and Grandma Pierce had given them. It faced Green Gore Lane and was just up from the village school.



Walton Stores, Milford Road, Walton
Photo courtesy of Mrs. Winifred Evans
(nee Pierce)

My mother ran the shop while my father continued to work at English Electric where he was a wheelwright foreman. He was exceptionally good at his job.

The shop was well known even in Stafford for its pop - the Penny Monster. At holiday periods when people used to walk from Stafford to Milford Common they'd stop and buy a Penny Monster and on the return journey they'd stop off again. It was very popular. My sister Phyllis and I used to spend every weekend in the shed behind the shop making the pop. We'd cut up cubes of flavourings, fill the bottles with water, drop a cube in each bottle and then add a measure of gas to give it fizz. The bottle top was attached to the bottle and a rubber seal made sure it was air tight. Sometimes we must have put in too much gas for on a number of occasions the bottles blew up. Fortunately we were protected by a grill or guard. It would never be allowed today.

I also delivered groceries to people's houses in Walton village and as far as Cannock Road. We had a bike specially made to take a big basket to carry the groceries. Many a time the bike tipped over because of the weight of the groceries and I ended up sprawled across the road with the groceries.

On my round I used to take orders for Hot Cross Buns a few days before Good Friday. On Good Friday Rowlands Bakery in Stafford would deliver the buns to the shop at 6 a.m. I would immediately go off on my bike with them so that customers could have them hot for their breakfast. After my deliveries I would go to the village school at Walton.



WALTON SCHOOL (circa 1924)

BACK ROW

- Harold Knight - - - - - Charlie Looker

4th ROW

Jennie	Margaret	Ann	Stella	Ethel	Phyllis
Dawson	Northwood	Northwood	Antill	Mellor	Pierce
	Margaret	Kathleen	Phyllis		
	Walters	Buttery	Teece		

3rd ROW

- Lizzie	?	Kathleen	Ruth	Kathleen
Wilkinson	Dawson	Hards	Edwards	Robinson
	Nellie	Joan		
	Tilstone	Buttery		

2nd ROW (Kneeling)

-	-	Ron	Stan	Ron
		Woodward	Senior	Lawson

FRONT ROW (Seated)

- Les	Stan	Harold	George	- Sid	Walter
Wiggin	Kemp	Groucott	Russel	Antill	Powell

On my mother's side Grandad Rowson was a shoemaker when Stafford was noted for its shoemaking. He was offered a job at the Pumping Station at Milford. Grandad was an instant success there and was chief engineer for many years. A house and garden was supplied with the job. He and Grandma Eliza Rowson had two daughters - my mother Frances Maria and Aunt Beattie. The girls were both educated at a private school. Frances Rowson married my father, George E. Pierce when she was 29. Beattie later married my father's brother Harry - two sisters marrying two brothers.

Grandma Rowson became housebound because of ill-health and Aunt Beattie looked after her.

At the age of 14 I went to work at Rowlands Bakehouse, Stafford to learn the trade. Mr. Ernie Rowland would pick me up every morning at 7.30 in a big Talbot car to take me to work. Many a time it would be 7 or 8 p.m. before I got home again. If the bakery had to cater for a dance it could be as late as midnight before I got home. I'd still have to be up next morning at 7.30 for work.

Phyllis paid £20 to Hardwicks the Hair-dressers of Newport Road to become an apprentice hairdresser. She worked for a year without a wage. Doris went into the catering business.

One day Dad had a serious accident at his work at G.E.C. He injured his spine and was never able to return to work. My mother looked after him and continued to run the shop. Dad died a few years later in 1929 as a result of his injuries. He was only 39 years old.

After my father's death Grandad and Grandma Rowson were very good to us. A Saturday treat was a visit to the Milford Pumping Station where Grandad worked. We children would receive a spoonful of malt and cod liver oil followed by 1½d. pocket money.

Grandad Rowson's sister Sarah Ellen Tranter had lost her husband Edwin some years previously in 1931. She offered to help my mother to build a new shop opposite the old one. Mrs. Tranter would live with us in a bigger more modern house and shop where she would have two rooms in the house for her exclusive use.

The combined house and shop was built in 1931 by Osbornes the builders at a cost of £850. The lane by the side of the new shop we knew as Kedlock Lane. Laura Husselbee in her book 'Down By Jacob's Ladder' called it Green Gore Lane.

My mother was a very good cook. She made all the sweets to sell in the shop - coconut chips, nut toffee etc. and all for 2ozs. a penny. At weekends she made oatcakes, pikelets and fancy cakes for the cyclists from the C.T.C. (Cyclists Touring Club). Unfortunately the shop wasn't a success and in the end it was sold at a loss. It was a sad day for all of us especially my mother, who had worked so hard and lost the battle.

Mother re-married and went to live in Hanley. My sister Doris went with her. Phyllis went to live in Queensville with her future in-laws, the Instances, and later married Harry Instance. I went to stay with the Evans family of St. George's Road, Stafford and married George Evans on 3 January 1940.

Grandfather Pierce left his three sons Arthur, Harry and Frederick - my father George had died - a plot of land each in School Lane. Fred and Harry built detached houses - Nos. 3 and 4 School Lane. Arthur built two detached houses and a pair of semis. He lived in one of them.

During the war Uncle Harry and Auntie Beaty offered us 4 School Lane. We agreed to buy it under a gentleman's agreement. Mr. Pepper of Hand Morgan, Solicitors of Stafford, did not think it was a proper way to sell a house but we were trusted and eventually we finished paying for it in 1951. We were unable to live in it as it was occupied by Mr. and Mrs. Wetton.

Auntie May lived in the bungalow at No. 2 School Lane and when Grandad Pierce died in 1945 she let it to us and went to live with her friend Miss Thorley.

My husband George served for six years in the Services so that offer was marvellous. Eventually we kept pigs and a vegetable garden just like Grandad Pierce. Keeping pigs and poultry for the table was very common and my husband's pre-war trade as a butcher proved to be very useful.

My uncle Frederick Pierce and my Aunt Pattie who lived next door to us in School Lane, Walton had no children of their own and took very much to our two children, Michael and Ann. Auntie Pattie had been a tailoress with her own workshop in Shrewsbury. It was just after the war and clothes were rationed so we were grateful for the help Auntie Pattie was able to give us with making clothes for the family.

I used to go round Walton village with a wheelbarrow to collect the scraps from the neighbours to feed our pigs. We started breeding pigs and that was successful. But as Walton developed it became less suitable for pig rearing so in 1954 we moved to the hamlet of Whitgreave on the other side of Stafford, just off the A34 road to Stone. There we had 4½ acres to expand the business. My husband George continued to work at the Post Office in Stafford.

The house needed a lot of alterations to make it habitable. At first the children didn't like it. The toilet was a bucket up the garden. We bought in on 13 December 1954 and we moved in 21 May 1955. We well remembered the date for it snowed that day.

Our son stayed with Auntie Pattie during the week and obtained a scholarship in June when he was just 10 years old. That year Walton village school, under the Headmaster Mr. Eric Parker, did exceptionally well, getting a record number of pupils getting the scholarships to Stafford High School and Grammar School. We were very pleased of course and furthering his education he passed exams and went to Canterbury studying architecture, excelling all our hopes. He has his own business in London. He is married to Mary Jo Anderson with a son and daughter, David and Hannah. We are proud of him and his family.

Gillian Ann, our daughter, first went to Marston School following on to Riverway studying domestic science. Later she changed her mind and finished up at the G.P.O. Telephones on the day staff. My husband was on the night staff so there were two G.A.Evans there. She married Frank Lewis and bought a nearly new bungalow in Newport. They had two lovely daughters, Caron and Deborah. Then in 1969 Auntie Pattie died leaving 3 School Lane to Ann. We had it modernised but unfortunately the family only lived in it for six weeks when

Ann went into hospital to have her appendix removed. When she came home the children were overjoyed. Within 24 hours she was dead. She died of embolism. Frank didn't know what hit him. The children couldn't understand. We were all devastated.

Frank sold his house and came to live with us at Whitgreave. He was born in Brewood and worked in that area. All his friends were there. He courted and then married Susan Farrer from Newport and went to live at Shifnal. Sue was a wonderful mother to our two grandchildren and believe me she had more than her hands full. A son Stuart came along. Frank found work in the Potteries so they came to live in Yarnfield which was better for us.

Caron and Debbie are now both married. Caron has a lovely daughter Katie Ann, making us great-grandparents.

We stayed at Whitgreave for 30 years and moved to Stafford eight years ago when we retired.



Albert Fradley aged about 18 months.

Photo courtesy of Albert Fradley

My name is Albert Fradley. I was born on 24 April 1914. I was raised by my grandparents Emma and Thomas Fradley. At first we lived in a cottage in Hazelstrine Lane near the main Cannock Road. In 1919 we moved to Walton village where we lived in a house facing the back of the Old Vicarage.

My grandfather kept a pig and we cured our own bacon. He worked for the Allsopps as a gardener along with Mr. Northwood. His two sons were also gardeners, Arthur Fradley was a gardener for Rupert Evans the auctioneer and lived in a house near where the Staffordshire Police Headquarters now is in Weeping Cross. Harold Fradley was a gardener at the Sister Dora Nursing Home in Milford.

My mother Margaret died of cancer.

I started school in 1919 at Walton School. I have very good memories of it. It was built in 1838 and continued until 1988, so 50 years of teaching. Miss Alice Tagg and the Goldsmiths were teachers. Miss Tagg lived in the village across the road from the old Sexton, John Keeling. He was Sexton at Walton Church for 50 years. Mr. Longson, the Headmaster, was a fine bass singer in St. Thomas' Church Choir.

The Vicar in the 1920's was the Revd. Hitchings, whose choir I entered in 1922 at the age of 8 years. The choir served both Churches in those days. I was choir boy, altar server and organ blower too. I also stood holding the book at Christenings for the Vicar. I was confirmed in Walton Church in 1927 at the age of 13 years.



The Choir
of
St. Thomas' Church, Walton, Stafford
(circa 1924)

L to R.

Back Row

Phyllis Wright Barbara Northwood George Devall
Albert Groucott Ron Williscroft Mary ?

Middle Row

Ken Allcorn Amy Riley (Organist) William Longson
(Schoolmaster) Gerrard Hitchings (Vicar)
Charles Dodd Alice Tagg Walter Powell

Front Row

Tom Hawkins Albert Fradley Ron Lawson
George Russel

Photo courtesy of Albert Fradley

One of the annoying persons of the village was Mrs. Allsop who lived at Walton Bury. She used to have her eye on the choir all the time and reported talking in the choir to the school-master on Monday mornings.

Near to the school was a little sweet shop owned by Mrs. Pierce. In the winter time she sent up cups of hot Oxo when the bell went for playtime.

We used to spend a lot of time watching Mr. Fletcher at the blacksmith's forge.

Across from the blacksmith's was a pound, or a keep, where the stray cattle were housed.

Mr. Malpass was the only farmer in the village and I used to deliver milk night and morning for him before I went to school. The milk was poured into people's jugs on the doorsteps. I used to get 2/6d. in those days for doing the round.

One of the people we used to enjoy hearing in the school was a Mr. Wilmot Martin who was a farmer from Hixon, a Scot who used to give concerts for charity.

There was in the village a Miss Ball who made "nettle beer" we used to enjoy. Afterwards we made our way down the Vicar's garden "scrumping"!

Another event in the 1920's was the burning down of the old Golf House at Milford; it had a thatched roof. I believe this happened in March 1922. There was a course of 9 holes to play at the rear of the Sister Dora Home.

The village pump was served by a spring from The Old Croft at the rear. A trough used to be used by the horses when coming from the fields; this was lovely spring water.

The Parish Room was just past the front of the old vicarage and was used by the girls from the school for cookery lessons, and the boys did gardening.

The gentleman who lived in Walton Lodge was a member of solicitors, Hand & Morgan. He used to drive about in a carriage and pair.

The screens used to stop the draughts in the house were a heavy folding article, but a very colourful one, with rural pictures painted on.

The weekly scrubbing of the kitchen table, with the ever popular "soft-soap" left a strong smell of disinfectant. We also did the stair treads and the lavatory seat.

I remember the Arthur Hamnett's little butcher's at Milford. It is now an information hut for Cannock Chase next to The Little Fawn restaurant. There was also Jenny Alderson's little thatched cottage where you could leave your bike for 2d.

I retired from B.R.C. Stafford in April 1979. My wife Ferrie Elizabeth, nee Moorfield, died in December 1979. I have two sons, Ray and Kenneth and three grand-children, David, Claire and Matthew.

I worked as an electric welder at B.R.C. Stafford for 40 years.

In the 1920's I lived in the middle house of three on the end of Hazelstrine Lane, where it joined the main Cannock Road.

Down the lane was a brick yard where bricks were made. The means of transport was a steam wagon. I used to stand and watch it come up the lane, loaded.

Down the bottom of the lane were two cottages, right by the side of the canal. A spring of running water used to pass by the doorways. This spring supplied the water to our cottages by means of a set of pipes and a pumping ram. It was pure water and was relayed up to Acton Hill Farm. As a result of the spring water there was some very good watercress down the right-hand side of Hazelstrine Lane. Up the road towards Brocton the road on the right led up to Acton Farm.

On leaving the main road on the left was a cottage which was the home of the local policeman, Sgt. Amphlet.

In 1919 I used to walk from Hazelstrine Lane to Berkswich School.

In 1983 I was asked to make a statement by the Staffordshire County Council about the Chicken Run - a footpath connecting The Village with The Crescent, Walton. Some people living in Congreve Close believed the land belonged to them and put an iron gate at each end to stop people using it. I spent two days at Hanley Crown Court as a witness for the County Council. The County Council won, the gates were removed and the Chicken Run was re-opened.

My name is William Dawson. I was born on 23 September 1907 in Stockton Lane, Stockton, Stafford. My father, John Charles Dawson, was an engineer for the London and North Western Railway at the Water Pumping Station at the back of Joe White's, now The White House Stores, Milford. The pump was used to pump water under pressure to Stafford Railway Station to operate the lifts. It was also used for filling the water troughs between the railway lines for the steam engines to take on water.

The Nickolls family lived in a cottage a few doors up from Joe White's. The Nickolls' trucks are a frequent sight on Stafford roads today.

My mother Alice Holt had been in service to someone in the shoe business in Stafford. I remember her telling me she detested having to bone the shoes. Grandmother Holt lived in a little house in the grounds of Milford Hall where she was a poultry maid for the Levett family. My grandmother came to live with us when my grandfather died.

I was the youngest of a family of five. I had two sisters, Mary and Dorothy and two brothers, John (Jack) and George. Some time after I was born our family moved to 15 The Village, Walton. Next to us lived Miss Ball. She kept a few beehives. I remember her catching a swarm of bees in a large basket after drugging them with smoke. Mrs. Mahon lived in the house next door to her. She had two sons in the Army. They wore red tunics with black trousers. There was a hedge dividing our row of houses from the next row. In that row lived Mr. Beech, butler to Lady Salt, then the Duttons and in the end terrace Mr. Fletcher, the village blacksmith, and his family.



Alice Dawson (nee Holt)
with John Charles Dawson at their son's
William Dawson's wedding in 1938

I remember Laura Dutton and enjoyed reading her book about the village 'Down By Jacob's Ladder'. I remember she used to go to the socials in the village school with my sisters Mary and Dorothy Dawson and May Bennett. There was no village hall so the school was used at Christmas and on a few weekends for entertainment. The popular dances at that time were the Waltz, the Lancers, the Barn Dance, the Military Two-Step and the Viletta. The Lancers entailed holding hands with alternate boy and girl and swirling round in a circle. Usually the girls couldn't keep up and ended with a few of them being swung off their feet in the air. At one of these dances either May Bennett or Laura Dutton struck their legs against a wall or piece of furniture and broke a leg. The girl was taken to hospital. After that the dances were much more subdued.

Opposite us lived the Williscroft family and the Devals lived next door to them. Next to them lived someone we knew as Solomon Grundy. The Burtons had a farm at the top of the hill nearly opposite the Post Office. I can remember the two Burton girls. They used to play a form of badminton over the wall of their farm. The Burtons had a tourer car with red leather upholstery. They owned a few cows and supplied milk in the village. As a boy I used to try and help on their farm. I can remember turning a skimming machine to skim the cream off the milk.

During the 1914-1918 War our family moved to the cottage next to the Parish Room, Walton where my mother was caretaker. I remember the Parish Room being used as a meeting room for Whist Drives and the like. Once the W.I. used me as a model to practise on during their First Aid training in dealing with wounded soldiers. They covered me from head to foot in bandages. I couldn't have been more than 8 or 9 years old.



Mrs. Holdford ran the village shop. She had a daughter, Tet or Tessie. I can remember Laura Dutton (married name Husselbee) from the socials at Walton School. A girl called Rudd used to stay with Mrs. Trundley in Walton village during the school holidays.

There was a tree in a field off Brocton Lane, Walton called the Coronation Tree. It used to be fenced off. There was a party with Maypole dancing in that field for the Coronation celebrations in 1911. The field was near where Berkswich Junior School now stands.

There used to be a pond near the gate to the Oldcroft near the village pump. I've got a mark on my hand from the barbed wire that used to be round the pond.

When we lived at 15 The Village we used paraffin lamps at night. A big surprise for me when we moved to the cottage next to the Parish Room was the gas lighting. It was a real luxury after the paraffin lamps. About that time I caught Scarlet Fever and had to spend a few weeks in the hospital at Tithe Barn Road in Stafford.

The rent for our cottage, which was two up, two down, was paid to the property side of the Church of England.

My sister Mary (married name McCormick) held her wedding reception in the Parish Room.

My father moved to a new job as engineer at the Stafford Borough Water Pumping Station at Milford near the old Milford Station. The pumps were used to pump drinking water from the reservoir in Shugborough Park to Stafford town.

My sister Dorothy Hartley was in service in another part of the country.

During the First World War I watched the soldiers being marched to the Military Camp on Cannock Chase near Brocton. I remember a railway line being laid from the main line at Milford to the Camp. It ran from the side of Nickolls' Haulage Business across the main Stafford to Lichfield Road, over Milford Common and to the back of the Sister Dora Nursing Home. A steam digger was used to make the cuttings through the hills.

I can remember a Hendley Page bomber aeroplane parked in a field on Stockton Common - near where Baswich Crest is now. There was quite a crowd gathered to see it and when it took off people's hats went flying all over the place, blown by the back-draught from the aeroplane's propellers.

Another time I saw a small army observer plane in a field near where The Shawms now is. The army sentry wouldn't let us near it but we could see that it had a basket type cockpit for two people with the engine and the propellor placed behind to give better viewing. It had twin wings with struts.

We always went with the soldiers when they came marching through Walton village.

I can remember Thomas Fletcher the village blacksmith. There were no houses on Oldcroft Road (New Road then). There were fields all the way up from the village to Cannock Road. Walton Cricket Club ground was in a field on its own with a pavilion at one end.

We used to roam around a lot as lads. In the summer we'd often go down Grey Gore Lane under the railway bridge - if we were in a devilish mood we'd run across it - over the canal bridge and over a field to a place on the River Sow we called Swan Island.

To the side of the island Captain Levett kept a rowing boat in a boathouse which overhung the water. Four of us boys would leave our clothes on the bank and swim under the door of the boathouse and climb into the boat. Our combined weight would lower the boat in the water enough to get it under the door and out we'd go onto the river and enjoy ourselves rowing up and down.

One day Mr. Humphreys, coachman and handyman for the Levetts, caught us as we were rowing about on the river. As he had our clothes we couldn't run off. He made us put the boat back in the boathouse. He allowed us to put on our boots and short trousers and marched us off up to Captain Levett at Milford Hall. We were taken into his study where we had a right telling off. Captain Levett said to me, 'I know your father and when I see him I'll tell him and let him punish you.' I got off with the belt and a severe telling off from my father.

The gentry were very good to the working class in those days and to upset the Levetts, the Twiggs, the Alsops or Lady Salt just wasn't done.

We were dab hands with a sling. Colin Tilstone's dad was a gamekeeper for the Levetts and we used to go into the fields round Milford Hall and amuse ourselves knocking tins off stumps and posts. We were just as accurate with a sling as with a catapult.

We used to get an old pram, take off the body and frame from the wheels and resting our feet on the back axle and hands on the front axle use it as a chariot. We'd go racing down School Lane, steering ourselves with both hands on the front axle. We usually ended up in somebody's ditch or hedge and got a clip round the ear for wearing our shoes out.

At one time the Parish Room was used as a Youth Club and in the early 1930's my brother-in-law Edward McCormick was involved in its running.

Mr. Williscroft was our Scoutmaster and we used to go camping in some fields near Llandulas, North Wales. About fifteen of us would go by train. On the way up to the field was a butcher's shop. One day as we were passing the butcher looked up at us and brought the chopper down on his hand. Mr. Williscroft bandaged his hand up and went with him to Colwyn Bay Hospital. The butcher recovered and we were treated to quantities of free meat from the butcher for the excellent First Aid rendered by Mr. Williscroft.

My school pals were Tom Northwood, Bill Groucott, Harold Walls, Tom Alcorn, Sidney Clay, Colin Tilstone and Jack Dodd.

One winter the canals and ponds were frozen solid and we were allowed to skate on the ice at Milford Hall pool. A Mr. Lewis gave a demonstration of speed skating in which he jumped over a line of chairs on the ice.

One day when we were playing in the school playground at Walton Village School we could see lots of smoke and flames over Milford. A few of my classmates and myself bunked off school and ran across the fields behind Milford Hall towards the fire. When we got to the fire we found that Milford Golf Club-house was just a pile of smouldering ashes and burnt timbers.

When we were fourteen or fifteen in the very hot summers we would go swimming in the River Sow. We'd go down Stockton Lane past the railway cottage, down to another railway cottage next to the railway line where the Mahons lived. Mr. Mahon was a ganger with the railways and they used to live next to us at Walton. We'd go under the railway line, over the canal bridge and across the field to the river. I used to go there with my niece Evelyn McCormick and nephews Norman and Doug, and the Tilstones.

In the summer holidays we helped to stack the corn in stacks to dry.

I remember potato picking in the fields where Walton High School is now built.

One day we were walking in the fields near Stockton Lane when we heard the squeals of a rabbit that was caught in a snare. We let it go but we were seen by the farmer, Bill Edwards and he told us to keep away from the fields.

In the brook by Jacob's Ladder we sometimes tickled for trout. We'd flick them out onto the bank and then put them back into the water.

Jack Dodd and I became good friends. We built model boats, flying machines and radio crystal sets together. We both went to dancing lessons at the Assembly Room in Tipping Street, Stafford. The instructor was a Mr. Masks. We also got interested in girls for dancing partners. My partner was Doris Ellsmore.

I had a job at Walton Vicarage cleaning shoes, polishing the knives and cutting sticks for Miss Pitt who was housekeeper to the Rev. Hitchin. When the Vicar bought a car he had a door put in the back of the stable so he could drive straight through and not have to reverse out.

I can remember the farmer at Tixall Farm burning mounds of cattle and digging a big hole and covering piles of cattle in the hole with lime in an effort to rid his herd of foot and mouth disease.



In 1921 I started work on the platform at Stafford Station as a tea trolley attendant with two girls. I had to look after the tea urn which was heated with methylated spirits. I was dressed in a button suit with black trousers. I had to leave as the woman in charge wanted my job for her son.

In 1922 I started work at Dorman's factory, Foregate as a trainee in the engine erecting shop. Later I was moved to the drilling shop. I had to go to the Tenterbanks School four evenings a week for Machine Drawing, Maths, English and Algebra.

Mr. Orchard, who lived near us in Walton, sent me to see someone in the engineering section at the Universal Grinding Co. Doxey, Stafford. I got a job helping in the garage and workshop. One day I was told to get a driving licence. I just signed a driving licence and the foreman Mr. Lesley Jones took me with him in a 1-ton truck. He told me to watch what he did and took me to Seighford and back. He put me in the driving seat and told me not to come back until I'd learned to drive it. I was 18. On my first driving job I delivered wheels to Wolverhampton. I travelled all over the Black Country making deliveries.

It was while working at Universal Grinding Wheel Co. that I met my future wife. When there were workers' socials we used to dance together a lot. I lived at Walton and she lived at Haughton. At first I used to take her home on the crossbar of my push-bike. I soon bought myself a motor-bike. A man at work had one he couldn't repair. I soon put it right and used it for a number of years. I think it was £5 well spent.



William Dawson with his bride
Irene May Pidgeon on their wedding day 1938

Any spare time I had I spent watching the engineers at work. When a new lathe came in I asked the charge-hand if I could work on it. Unfortunately the new foreman, Bill W didn't like that at all. He wanted a job for his son so I was sacked.

I got a job as a mechanic with William Gwennap of Wolverhampton Road, Stafford.

Mr. Dodd, who was managing director of the Universal Grinding Co. lived opposite us in Walton where Mr. Morgan the solicitor used to live. I helped him with an electric lighting plant he put in. Gas lighting was the norm in people's homes in those days, with coal fires for heating and cooking.

One Sunday morning Mr. Dodd came across to our cottage next to the Parish Room and asked me to pick something up from his yard at the factory in Doxey. I said I couldn't as I no longer worked there. He wanted to know why. Later he offered me my old job back but I told him I was quite happy in my new job.

In 1938 I married Irene May Pidgeon of Haughton. We had one child, a daughter Constance Irene (married name Salt) and two grandchildren, Andrew and Vincent. My wife died in 1987. I grew up with Ron Lawson whose parents kept a shop in Stockton Lane called Mammy Greens.

My father used to say there would never be another war in his lifetime. He died in 1939. My mother went to live with my sister Mary in Stockton Lane. My parents are both buried in Baswich Churchyard, as are my grandparents on my mother's side, the Holts. My father's parents, the Dawsons, are buried in Acton Churchyard.



Smallwood Family, Brocton 1917

Standing: Margaret, Reginald, Lily, Laura

Seated: Alfred (father), Alfred, Emma (mother)

My name is Margaret Smallwood. I was born on 9 June 1904 in Brocton in a cottage on the same land that this house stands on. I've never lived anywhere else but on this land. My father, Alfred Smallwood, had a small-holding here. My mother's name was Emma (nee Needham). Her family farmed land at Bednall. I had two brothers, Alfred and Reginald and three sisters, May, Laura and Lily. May went to Canada when she was 13. She died there in 1988. She was 90.

My grandparents, the Smallwoods, lived at the Green Farm, Brocton. They had 13 children. Mary Smallwood died in 1891 aged 42 leaving her husband Richard to bring up the 13 children. He died eight years later in 1899. He was 50. A cousin of the family came and reared the children. They all grew up and got married. Two of the boys, my Dad, Alfred and Uncle Bill, stayed on and farmed at Green Farm. Three sisters went to London as cooks, two went to America and the others stayed in England.

As a family we were almost self-sufficient. We grew our own vegetables. We had our own cows, pigs, hens and a horse to pull the trap. My mother made butter every Friday to last us the week. Any shopping we did our father took us in the horse and trap to Stafford.

One day Dad bought us children a little donkey. He built a little cart with a seat for two in it. On Sunday mornings two of us would harness up the donkey and cart and drive to the Chetwynd Arms public house to fetch a pint of beer for my father.

We used to turn the cows out on Cannock Chase and they would eat their way down to Milford. At 4 o'clock I would saddle up the horse and go to fetch them back for milking.

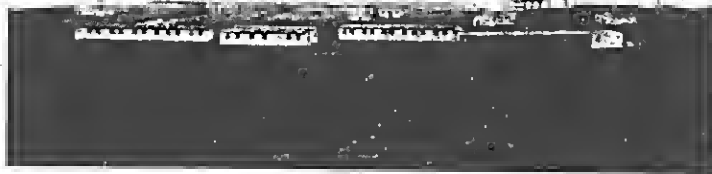
During the 1914-1918 War an Army Camp was built on the Chase and a railway line laid to link the camp with the main railway line at Milford. This branch line was used to convey soldiers' luggage. The soldiers had to march. It was from this camp that the soldiers went out to France to fight.

We opened a shop in one room of our house to cater for the soldiers' needs. We sold cigarettes, cakes, sweets, pork pies, minerals, bananas etc. The soldiers would come down past the house and they'd always call in and buy things. Every morning a German officer accompanied by a British guard would come to collect milk for the Senior German officer at the camp. If it wasn't ready the two of them would stand and wait by the cow shed door while my father milked the cow. We were that close to the camp we could hear the bugler play Reveille at 6 o'clock every morning and lights out at 11 o'clock every night.

There was a very bad 'flu epidemic among the soldiers and a large number died and were buried in the cemetery on the Chase.

We all went to school at Walton Village School. We walked there every day. During the winter months, if it was snowing or raining heavily, my father would come in the horse and trap to fetch us home. He'd load us all up in the cart, as many as he could get in, wrap us up in rugs, give us a couple of umbrellas to shield us from the weather and off home we would go.

During the First World War we had lunches provided for us three days a week by Mrs. Longson, Headmistress of the school. Two pupils were chosen to go and prepare the lunches in Mrs. Longson's house next door to the school.



CAMP, BROCTON.

TO GREET YOU.



THERE are places in England to Brocton superior,
In fact, it was known long ago as Siberia!
My word! it is like it,—from towns far away,—
Nothing but Khaki to make the place gay.

It's not too exciting as you may well guess,
For shops there are few and trains there are less,
But men there are plenty to cross the blue sea,
A fine lot of fellows—of course counting me!

Each man has his fairy, not always a Mary,
He thinks of her much as he sings "Tipperary,"
He marches right briskly under weight of his pack,
And dreams that "C.B." only means "coming back"!

And this is from one of them to wish you "good luck,"
He is hoping to prove he's not wanting in pluck,
Here's a handful of love from lone Cannock Chase,
From a lad who just longs for a sight of your face!

[Copyright.]

C.F.P.

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CARD

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SHIRAZ



Postcard of Brocton village dated 11/2/1918 -
script "I saw this place when out marching.
House got windows something like those in our
house (Tiverton) don't you think so?"

83.



One day we'd have soup and dumplings. Next day we'd have Irish Stew and spinach. Another day we'd have cheese. Unfortunately, because of the War, there was a shortage of bread.

When I was about 10 we all used to meet at the Mission Room - now All Saints' Church, Brocton - and knit scarves, balaclavas, socks and gloves for the British soldiers. We also had piles of papers we'd cut into strips and coil them round a stick to make coiled paper. We then filled pillows with the coiled paper for use on the beds in the soldiers' hospitals. The pillows were provided by Miss Chetwynd.

As a child I went to Sunday School at Church. Miss Mildred Chetwynd was our teacher. Every year she took us to Brocton Hall, home of the Chetwynd family, for a strawberry and cream tea. The hall is now the home of Brocton Golf Club. Her father, Mr. Chetwynd, was known as the squire of Brocton. My father worked for him as a groomsman and footman. When the Chetwynds went out my father used to ride on the back of the carriage dressed in the Chetwynd livery with a cockade in his cap.

I left school when I was 14 to help my mother with the farm work. I delivered milk round Brocton village with a big milk can and a pint measure. I did the round twice a day, even on Christmas Day.

My parents lived until they were 82. One of my parents died one Saturday and the other the following Saturday. It was a bit of a shock to us.



My sister May's husband Jessie Adams
from Canada outside
Brook House, Brook Lane, Brocton.
Brook House is now only a memory.

Photo courtesy of Miss Margaret Smallwood

In her book Down By Jacob's Ladder Laura Husselbee, nee Dutton, mentions that Mrs. Trundley stayed in a house in Brocton while Lady Salt had a new house built for her next to the Duttons' house.

It was in our cottage that Mrs. Trundley stayed while her cottage was being built. I remember Mrs. Trundley was a very jolly person. She stayed with us for about twelve months until her house was built. She had an only son Jim who was killed in the First World War.

My mother warned her when she arrived, whatever she did not to touch the dog when he had a bone. One day Mrs. Trundley came round the back yard and stroked the dog as it was gnawing a bone. The dog bit her through the nose making quite a hole. My mother bathed it for her. Today an ambulance or a doctor would have been called.

My father's sister Elizabeth Smallwood and his aunt, also named Elizabeth Smallwood, ran a tea shop from the front room of a house in Oldacre Lane, Brocton. They used to cater for the Sunday School parties from Stafford who visited the Chase.

My father's aunt had a big tea-room built in the garden to cater for the summer trade. The house was where the council houses now stand in Oldacre Lane.



THE OLD ACRE HOUSE IN STAFFORD

My father's Aunt Elizabeth Smallwood (seated) and his sister, also Elizabeth Smallwood outside their tea shop in Oldacre Lane, Brocton

Photo courtesy of Miss Margaret Smallwood

Soon after my great-aunt died my Aunt Elizabeth married a prison officer, Tom Davies, from Stafford Prison. Later they moved to the Isle of Wight. The house in Oldacre Lane became derelict. Later it was knocked down and council houses built. My Aunt Elizabeth and her husband Tom later returned to the area and lived in Oldcroft Road, Walton. A cousin, Jim Smallwood, lives locally in Pool Lane. He used to be the milkman for the village.

My sister May Smallwood went to Canada where she met and married a man named Jessie Adams. It was 30 years before she came back to see us with her husband. They stayed for three months.



Arthur and Ada Buttery (nee Hubbard)

My name is Joan Martin (nee Buttery). I was born on 27 May 1917 at The Lodge, Chetwynds, Brocton.

My father Arthur Buttery worked at Dorman's factory in Stafford as a marker-off. He marked the holes in the machinery where holes had to be drilled.

My mother Ada Buttery, nee Hubbard, came from Wolverhampton. I believe she met my father while she was in service at one of the big houses in Brocton.

My father was born in one of the cottages opposite Green Farm.

My grandfather Samuel Buttery was Brocton village blacksmith and his shop was attached to a cottage owned by the Smallwood family. I imagine he rented the shop from them.

I have five sisters, Kathleen, Emily, Ada, Barbara and Edna and five brothers, Norman, Ronald, Geoffrey, Peter and Raymond. Kathleen has died, one lives away and six of us still live in the area.

I went to school at Walton village school where I was taught by Mr. and Mrs. Longson. When they retired Mr. Morgan, a Welshman, took over. He'd been a soldier in the First World War. I believe he'd been gassed during the War in the trenches. We called him Pecker Morgan because of his long nose.

If you got wet coming to school the Longsons used to change your clothes and dry them. They had a box full of shoes so that you could change your shoes. The Longsons lived in the School House next to the School.



There used to be a ram in a field opposite the school and some of the boys let it loose into the playground and so, of course, we all ran for our lives into the classrooms where we stood on the desks screaming. The teachers came running and the boys got into trouble.

I can remember a lad of about 6 named Hodgkinson dying of diptheria.

The Longsons also taught my father and Mr. Morgan taught our son Roy.

My aunt Dorothy Buttery told me how they used to go to school in the Black and White Cottage, Brocton. My mother told me that it became the village Post Office after the school closed. Miss Bullock kept the Post Office.

My father Arthur Buttery went to the Black and White Cottage village school between the ages of 5 and 7. They used to have a big range in the room where lessons were held and the children sat round it. There used to be a pot of turnips cooking and the teacher used to give the children some turnips.

The village pound was in the garden of the Blacksmith's shop.

Every year a fair was held on the grounds of the Chetwynd Arms public house. It was held on the football ground which was right alongside the main road.

Opposite page

Top photo: Samuel Buttery, Blacksmith, Brocton

Photo courtesy of Miss Margaret Smallwood.

Bottom photo: The arch that can be seen above the door to Samuel Buttery's Blacksmith's Shop can still be seen above the bay window of what is now part of a cottage in Brocton



Elizabeth and Samuel Buttery

Brocton village blacksmith and his wife

Opposite page:

The Buttery family lived in one of the
cottages on the right in the photos



Brompton Village, STAFFORD.





Black and White Cottage, Brocton.

Once the village school - probably a Dame School
and later the village Post Office.

The following pages are from an article printed
in the Staffordshire Advertiser on 1 September
1923 and re-produced here by kind permission of
the Stafford Newsletter. Our thanks to Norman
Buttery of Brocton who supplied the article.

History of the
Chetwynd
Family
and
Brocton.



Reprinted from the
"Staffordshire Advertiser"
of September 1, 1923.

The following interesting historical sketch of the Chetwynd Family and Brocton was given by the Rev. R. Aylward Jones, curate-in-charge of Brocton Mission Church, to the members of the North Staffordshire Field Club who visited the district on Saturday, August 25th :-

Broctone is described in Domesday Book (1085) as being in the Hundred of Culveston, the modern Cuddlestone and with Walestone (Walton), Actone (Acton Trussell), and Bedehala (Bednall), is included in Baswich, which had a parochial area of 6,608 acres. Before the Norman Conquest they were all in Saxon times in the possession of the Church of Saint Chad, or the Bishop of Chester, and remained in his hands afterwards. Of Broctone and Bedehala it is said, "Sunt wasta," they are uncultivated, and no definite acreage of them is given; much of them, if not the greater part, was covered by forests.

There appear to be no other records of the history of the village until the year 1549, when it was visited by the Commissioners of King Henry VIII., who state that there is a Chapel at Brocton, with a yard, a Green, a Bell and 2 candlesticks, and that "service is wont to be hld according as the devotion of the inhabitants moveth thereto."

He had tried to trace where the chapel stood, and he had ascertained from some of the old inhabitants and others who had gone abroad that what was called Nannas or Nun's Lane used to run off Walton-lane and ended in the vicinity of Milford Hall. One villager had an idea that there used to be a chapel just beyond this lane. The land or field, which was bounded on one side by Nun's Lane and on the other by Walton-lane, was described as "Chappel Leasowes" in some old deeds, some 40 or 50 of which were in Mrs. Chetwynd's possession at the time the Brocton Estate was sold, and which he had been privileged to inspect. Evidently this was where the chapel stood, and he thought it was not intended primarily for the inhabitants, but for nuns, who were domiciled there in a convent. When the nunnery was dissolved and the nuns dispersed, the chapel was used possibly by the inhabitants, although it stood half-a-mile out of the village.

The first known ancestor of the family was Adam Chetwynd, who resided in the village of that name on the borders of Shropshire and Staffordshire, and appears to have obtained the land from a family of Turolds about 1180. Their connection with Brocton begins in the year 1692 when it was bequeathed to various relatives by Walter Chetwynd, the Antiquary, who died in 1692, and was owner of Ingestre and other property, including Grendon Hall, Warwickshire, and another estate at Rugeley. The Brocton estate, which

appeared to have been of good size, was described in an old deed as having been bought by him for a nephew Walter Chetwynd, in 1680, and when he died in 1692 he bequeathed the hall and estate to him.

Some land in Brocton adjoining the estate was in the 18th century in the hands of the Byrd family, from whom it passed into the possession of Rev. Richard Levett (Vicar of W. Wycombe), son of the Rector of Blithfield, when he married Miss Lucy Byrd of Stafford about 1770, to whom the Milford Estate, including probably Brocton property, belonged. It was inherited by their son, also a Rev. Richard Levett, of Milford Hall, who died 1843. As the Chetwynd family owned property in Milford including the "Barley Mow," exchanges of land were made by them from time to time up till 1840 to secure contiguity, and thus, e.g., the Hall Meadow, Running Doles, Cowpasture and Poor's Croft became part of the Hall Estate. The grandson of this Richard Levett, Capt. W. Byrd Levett, had in his possession at Milford Hall a picture of Brocton Manor House, a picturesque old building which was taken down and superseded by the present Hall. Walter Chetwynd, who came from Rugeley, lived at the Hall for some time, and his son married Mary Sneyd, of Keele. They had a son, Walter Chetwynd, and it was he who about 1760 built the present Hall of red brick. Walter Chetwynd died in 1778, and he and his father, with other relatives, were buried in Baswich Churchyard, their names being inscribed on tablets. His son George was created a baronet and made Clerk of the Privy Council in 1772.

The first baronet, Sir George Chetwynd, entertained King George IV. when he was Prince of Wales, and the Royal visitor slept in the room just above the entrance to the Hall, called the Eagle room. Sir George Chetwynd's successor inherited Grendon Hall, which had belonged to another branch of the family, and when he removed there his brother, Mr. William Fawkener Chetwynd, took possession of the estate at Brocton. From William Fawkener it passed to his son. The Hall and Estate have now become by purchase the property and Headquarters of the Brocton Hall Golf Club.

Brocton Lodge or Villa was built early in the last century and was the residence of Henry, youngest son of the first Sir George Chetwynd. It was probably here that Mrs. Henry Chetwynd lived, who married John Chetwynd (died 1870): the preface of a Poetical History of England written by her is signed "Brocton Lodge, 1849."

On the Hall colonnade is to be seen a meteorite of unusual size, which fell in the grounds about the year 1850, a glowing

mass of metal, and when cold was dug out of the earth by members of the family and placed in its present position. Some distance in front of the Hall are two isolated walls with fireplaces. These formed part of the old bailiff's house, and were probably of the Early 18th Century. The Village Farm, occupied by Mr. Haines, dates from 1646. All this part is spoken of in a deed of 1720 as "the manor or lordship of Brocton." In the road in front of the park stood a village Cross, which in 1780 was pulled down, the stones being used to build the park wall. There was also a windmill by the pool on Bank Farm till 1820. The Village Pound was opposite the Post Office, and it was rather neatly constructed with stone copings and a stone gateway. This was used for impounding stray cattle, and at the east side were the stocks. He hoped that the pinfold would be purchased and made some time public property to secure its preservation.

An old school once stood by the side of the road to Milford in the village and on land formerly known as Birches Dale. The school was pulled down about 40 years ago, but some of the stones still remain in the wall at the roadside. There were ten or twelve boys and girls attending the school, and the schoolmaster or mistress received £12 a-year, in addition to house and fuel free. Brocton in olden time possessed four or five gates, some of which were used as toll gates. The last one, on the camp site, was removed during the war.

As regards the name Brocton it is natural to assume that it was called after the brook, though the Domesday spelling is Broctone; but as there is a Badger Hill on the South boundary and a Broc Hill on the north-east,—"broc" is Anglo-Saxon for badger,—it is a plausible suggestion that the district may have been named after the animal, which was so common there.

*The Saw pit + part of the machinery is standing
1964*

Brocton NSFC Vol 69 P 73

Chetwynde Neston

*Brocton wakes held on Sept 19 as
fair was held there up to 40 years ago
Told me by Mr. Buttery 1940*

① The Pound was in the garden of the old Blacksmith

POSTSCRIPT

As European Year of Older People draws to a close it is perhaps appropriate to look at the impact Oral History can have on learning and improving the quality of life within a community. Where people have had their memories published it has given them a sense of pride that their lives have been valued and valuable. For some the immediate reaction is a joyful one - 'I've never had my name in print before. I must get a copy for so and so'. For others it can lead to new acquaintances, correspondence from readers a long way off, contact with long lost friends and a new found respect in the community.

All of us have a story to tell if not for the community we live in then for our families and friends. In your spare moments put your story on paper. If for some physical reason you are unable to, ask your children or grandchildren to write while you talk.

Once you have got it all down have it photo-copied and give copies to your family. Identify the people in your photographs. If you have collected press cuttings of your family or the place where you live, your local history group might be interested in photocopying them. Your local history group might well be willing to copy your old photos for its archives

If you are interested in writing your memories here are some pointers to help you.

Start with yourself - full name, date of birth, names of your brother and sisters, your occupation, your parents' names - mother's maiden name, places and dates of birth, their brothers and sisters, your parents' occupations. Do the same for your grand-parents and so on as far back as your can go.

Name of the school you went to, your teachers, your friends, the things that happened at school, games you played, outings, special occasions, rhymes, sayings, traditions, accidents.

Name of church you went to (if you were a church-goer), names of vicars, priests etc., special events. Your village/town - elderly people you knew, village customs, name of postman, shop-keeper, post-mistress etc., games you played - places you visited, means of transport, special events or happenings. If you can remember any stories your parents told you, put them down on paper. Contact your local history group to see if they have an Oral History Section. The William Salt Library in Stafford and the County Record Office are interested in having copies of peoples' memories. Some schools - Junior and Secondary have Oral History Projects as part of the National Curriculum.

If you wish to contact me for advice on how to go about setting up an Oral History Group or how to collect peoples' memories, do write to me at the address below.

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